

THE LITERARY FOCUS.

Vol. I.—Miami University, Oxford, (O.) June, 1827.—No 1.

"Stilus optimus, et praestantissimus dicendi effector ac magister."

Edited and published by the Erodelphian and Union Literary Societies.

'The Hunters of Kentucky'

OR THE

RECOLLECTIONS OF AN EARLY SETTLER.

The life of an early settler, in a region hitherto unmarked by civilization, must always be one full of incident, and abounding with adventures, that in the hands of the novelist, would furnish exhaustless resources for public amusement. Indeed, it is often matter of surprise to me, that in this age of romance writing, when all the scribbling tribe are straining their imaginations, in fruitless search after new and unoccupied ground, in fancy's fairy land; or labouring, like poor devils in a mine, to the end, that they may furnish up some worn-out, thread-bare tale of "the chieftain and his host of pirates"—or new-model some sickening story of the "misfortunes of true love"—that none have ever thought of betaking themselves to real life, and performing a service worthy their pens, that of collecting from traditions fast perishing, the exploits, & rescuing from oblivion, the names, of those who fought, bled, and suffered for the cause of liberty. And why should not the deeds of the untutored, and the humble in life, as it regards worldly goods, "live in the page that immortality saves," equally with those of the great and high born? Surely not that they have done and endured less. Many are the lives of men, whose names have sunk into forgetfulness, that if written would have had no equal in either of these respects on the rolls of fame. One of your "great men" could not have lived, where Boone and hundreds of others, have rejoiced and triumphed. I will venture to say, there is not an old man

in the Union, if he be a native, whose memory is not filled with remembrances of his youthful days, which, if brought to light, would soon displace in our daily publications, the trash about "knights and maids," that send the brains of half our youth "a wool gathering." No state abounds more in history of this kind than Kentucky, and the first leisure moment that heaven spares to me, shall be devoted to making a part, at least, public—an office which no one else in this ungrateful age seems willing to perform.

Thus spoke my father's father, while the wind of a stormy night in December was whistling without the door, and the cheerful influence of a blazing hearth, had fixed in silent contemplation the various group assembled in the ancient hall of his country residence. My grandsire was one of the earliest of those pioneers, who literally, and without a figure, opened a way in the wilderness, for the march of civilization; and perhaps it was the secret hope of seeing his own name among the number of those who must of necessity be introduced in such a work, that caused him to look forward with such anxiety, for the publication of a history of his adopted state, and which at length, from long familiarity, appeared to him an object of so easy fulfilment, that he resolved, as we have seen, to accomplish it himself. Nor was it a vain boast; for amongst his papers which have fallen into my hands, remains on the subject which most interested his heart, enough to show, that he had seriously embarked in an undertaking, that has since been executed so well by another, and an abler pen. Long since has my ancestor paid the debt of nature, and slept

the "sleep that knows no waking," beneath the soil upon which the greater part of an active and busy manhood had been spent, leaving in charge to me, upon his death-bed, the care of his effects. From a neatly stitched volume of his writings, we have selected the following account, which we claim the privilege of relating in our own words.

It was towards the latter part of the June following the period so well remembered in the annals of Kentucky by the appellation of "the hard winter," that Ruddle's and Martin's stations surrendered to the Indians. Among the unhappy prisoners, who fell into their hands on this occasion, was Francis Desmond, said to have been descended from the celebrated Irish family of that name, his wife and an only son, a boy of from eight to nine years of age, the delicacy of whose health, made him an object of more than ordinary solicitude, to his dotting parents. Whether however we are correct in tracing the origin of Francis Desmond, to the race of the famous hero, whom tradition relates to have rode so triumphantly on the neck of his mortal foe; this much at least is certain: His ancestors emigrated from Ireland to America, soon after the commencement of the civil war, which distracted so long the English government, and which aided at length in the establishment of Cromwell on the throne of the Stuarts. Upon the death of the Protector, the Desmonds, who had deemed it prudent to submit in quietness to the powerful sway of that extraordinary man, hastened to declare their attachment to monarchy, by joining with those, who set up the royal standard in Virginia, and proclaimed Charles II. their rightful sovereign. How that ungrateful monarch rewarded the zeal of the infant colony is well known. The new restrictions of his parliament on their commerce, compelled many of the emigrants to change again their place of residence, and seek once more in Old England, that freedom which was denied them

on this side the Atlantic. The family of the Desmonds gradually decayed beneath the shade of court favour. The father and two sons had fallen in Braddock's unfortunate campaign, and Francis, who alone remained, had sought in the wilds of Kentucky (the fame of which had spread far and wide) a home, where he might spend the rest of his days in peaceful obscurity. He had fixed upon one of the stations above named, and how soon his prospects of happiness were interrupted, has been already told. The Indians on this occasion, though under the command of Col. Byrd, an officer in the service of his Britannic Majesty, acted with their accustomed barbarity, and Desmond, who had given his voice in the fort for surrender, relying, like too many of its credulous inhabitants, on the promise of safety and security, pledged upon the faith of a soldier's honor, saw with an aching heart his wife and child, loaded with the spoils of their own homes, led out among the number of the captives. Indeed, from the moment that the gates were thrown open, and the savages admitted, he had been awakened to a sense of his real situation, and found, when the discovery could be of no avail, that the English commandant either wanted the inclination or the power to restrain his blood-thirsty host. But repentance was now in vain, and nothing was left him but to await, with manly fortitude, his fate. When however, his worst apprehensions were realized, when he looked upon the mistress of his affections, and beheld her pale and dejected, her eye fixed with wistful sadness upon his, as if asking that consolation which he could not give, his feelings were unutterable, and, unable to endure the sight, he turned away and wept.

Not long was he permitted to indulge his weakness—if to the outpouring of nature we may apply such a term—for the Indians, contrary to their usual wont after a victory, had no sooner sated themselves with pillage and

plunder, than they prepared, with a precipitation unaccountable, for their homeward march. Had the British commander, like a skilful captain have followed up his success, and proceeded immediately into the country ere the news of his appearance had time to spread, it must have fallen without opposition into the power of his master. Whatever were the motives of his conduct, no one who reads the narrative of his expedition, but must confess, the finger of heaven was there. Fortunate was his determination for Kentucky; unhappy for those, who, delivered up to the will of his myrmidons, were compelled to undergo a martyrdom on the road, for their country's sake. Feeble women, helpless children, and decrepit old men, whom the fatigues of the march overcame, found in the tomahawk a speedy relief from their sufferings, and were left where they fell, to wither and rot in the shade of the forest. Entreaty was met with derision, for the Indians did not understand, and the white men, worse than Indians, cared not to listen to the prayers of the wretches, who, from time to time, became their victims. Terrified at the horrid examples of this kind they had already witnessed, the parents watched their child, exerting his utmost activity, and forced into a trot to keep pace with the hurry of the march, with sensations that none but a parent can imagine or describe. Fear for a time lent him strength above his years; ten miles of the journey had already been performed, and as the sun was fast sinking behind the hills, the father began to indulge himself with the hope, that the party would presently halt for the night, when he should get speech of Col. Byrd, and prevail on him to exert his authority and find, for his son at least, some mode of conveyance. To halt hower, within so short a distance of his enemies, was not the intention of the panic-struck officer. The sun had set, and the doubtful glimmer of twilight had succeeded it, and still no preparations were made to encamp.

The father gazed upon his boy, beheld his flagging gait, and wearied aspect, and knew, though he tried to repel the thought, that he could hold out no longer. He saw him linger, then hurry on—then linger again—till at length, overcome and exhausted, he stumbled and fell. In a moment the hatchet was buried in his brain—a single mournful exclamation “my mother” quivered on his tongue—and he was dead. The cry of the agonized parents “O spare my child” alone interrupted the dreadful stillness caused by the deed; they that were behind quickened their tired steps, and the army moved on in sullen silence.

(To be continued.)

REFLECTIONS ON

INTEMPERANCE.

Should a friend assert, that he would go regularly, morning, noon and night, to an apothecary's shop, and there as often swallow a poisonous liquid; not only so, but should he actually commence his course, repair to the shop, and there calmly, deliberately and composedly drink the poisonous potion, until his whole system should begin to show the effects of the repeated draught, and the man himself begin to totter into the grave—what would people think? what would people say? They would undoubtedly say, that such a person was not only unworthy the society and fellowship of mankind; but that he was degrading himself and sinking beneath the level of the brute creation; that he was doing nothing less than committing suicide, tho' in a slow, a sure way.

What must be the state of such a being, could he but be induced, in a sober moment, to pause and reflect upon his mad career and its inevitable consequences? But no such moment does he spend, (at least awake.) Suddenly some misfortune—or rather good fortune—confines him, and prevents him from prosecuting his design and repeating his dose. The noxious potion dies within him, he awakes and be-

comes again a rational creature; he views with astonishment his swollen limbs and joints, and attempts to move with his wonted vigor, but trembles like the leaf upon the breeze, and struck with horror at his visage in the mirror, curses the day of his birth, and swears never again to sip from the cup, which had already well nigh confirmed his ruin. He strengthens his resolution, and for a while forbears to gratify an evil inclination.—The whole man becomes changed; by morn's first dawn you find him, instead of repairing to his usual haunt, busily engaged in some useful employment affording an example worthy of imitation by the virtuous and the good.

But alas! of how short duration are these pleasing prospects. Some demon directs him into his old forsaken path, he raises his eyes and beholds "the open door stand free to all;" something within him demands the accustomed satisfaction, and, without a moment's reflection, he hastens in to sip and never tire. Soon you may find a wretched family, removed to some obscure corner, to spend a miserable existence, contemplate the past, and view with awful dread their future prospects. Presently you may see the abandoned mortal sally forth and wander (he knows not whither) like a ship without her rudder, left to the mercy of the breeze and rolling tide. Before reason or reflection can teach him his situation, the noisy wheels of the loaden coach overtake and crush him as the reptile that creeps upon the earth.

Thus destruction comes upon a human being destitute of reason and degraded beneath the level of the brutes.

Picture now the scene! a few kind benevolent neighbors, who had often with tears, warned him of his approaching destruction, raise the body from the dust; the melancholly tidings are hurried to an affectionate wife surrounded with prattling little ones, indulging the fondest hopes that she might soon greet a sober husband and

yet enjoy those pleasing scenes ever attendant upon the happy union of husband and wife. But oh! how often do our fondest hopes perish and leave us ready to despair, in want and misery! I forbear to extend the picture; let those who know, how the tenderest feelings of human nature can bear so severe a shock, imagine the distress occasioned by folly and want of consideration in a single individual; and then say, whether we may not daily see circumstances similar to those imagined in this case. Yes, America must, to her disgrace, confess that thousands of similar instances have been occasioned by the intemperate, beastly use of ardent spirits. Where is the section of our country, which does not, to a greater or less extent, convert into an engine of destruction, the wholesome food, with which the bounteous hand of nature furnishes us for the satisfaction of rational wants? Where is the city, town or village which does not abound with houses licensed by public authority, to promote the cause of vice and send forth that horrid monster to stalk upon the face of the earth, clothed with all his power, to fix disease and death upon the human family.

It is indeed a lamentable fact, that these exist, and send thousands to the grave, even in our happy country, in despite of all the efforts of the wise, humane and good. But shall it ever be the case? Will the statesman, husbandmen, mechanic, forever deem this a subject unworthy their notice. Will public authorities never attempt to remedy the growing evil? Will fathers, mothers and teachers never perceive it to be their duty to impress the minds of youth with the evil tendency of intoxicating liquors, and to instil those pious principles which will remain during life, and lead the man to esteem habits of temperance, the greatest sources of pleasure within the control of mortals? Will it ever be a stigma upon our character, that nothing is done to restore man to a sense of his dignity and importance.—No.

I almost think I hail the day when a drunkard shall not be known—when the use of spirituous liquors shall cease (unless in consequence of their medicinal qualities.) It is with the greatest pleasure I learn, that in our Union, societies are forming, and individuals using their utmost exertions to suppress their intemperate use.

The eyes of the blind are opening and the ears of the deaf are becoming unstopped, to a knowledge of the train of evil consequences continually "flowing from distilleries."

To the editing committee of the *Literary Focus*:

GENTLEMEN,—

Enclosed you will receive a series of numbers, under the head of "Notes on the Miami country." Should you deem them of sufficient interest to merit a place in the columns of the work which you are about to publish, you will insert them, as best suits your plan of publication. You will perceive they are prepared in short numbers, of a length adapted to the limited room which your publication will permit you to devote to any one subject.

As the utmost limit, which you will permit them to occupy in any one number of the "Literary Focus," will necessarily continue them thro' a considerable length of time, the writer feels it due to himself and to your readers, to drop a remark here, introductory to the notes.

In the 1st and 2d numbers are contained facts of a general nature, equally observable in all sections of the great Western vale; together with some opinions which have been formed respecting them.

The 3d will give a general view of the *Miami country*, at the time it was first explored by the whites.

The 4th will show the march of population and civilization westward.

In the 5th and following numbers, will be given a brief historical sketch of the *Miami country*, from its earliest discovery and settlement up to 1820.

The writer is very conscious that these notes might have come from an abler pen; he has some confidence, however, that so far as *correctness* in dates, places, persons, &c. can make them valuable, the authentic sources, from which the materials have been gathered, will give them that value. The hardships and privations inseparable from the settling of a new country, rendered imminently dangerous from the continual ravages of savage neighbours, as was the situation of the pioneers in the *Miami country*, exclude the possibility of many of the circumstances connected with its early history being preserved upon paper; they exist only in the perishable memories of those who were personal actors in the scenes. These reminiscences the writer has endeavoured to collect, before the hand of time had laid the "remaining few" in their graves, and let fall the curtain of oblivion between us, and the early history of these enterprising and adventurous settlers of the *Miami forest*—but they are *notes only*, prepared amid the bustle and hurry of other pursuits, and they are only intended to preserve the facts, and place the materials within the reach of some future historian, who may arrange them with system, and give them the appearance of history.

Yours respectfully,
—E—

No. I.

NOTES ON THE MIAMI COUNTRY.

It is the opinion of the learned, that the earth has undergone many considerable changes, since it was first formed by the Creator of the Universe. The greater number of the more considerable changes, appear to have taken place in ages so remote, that no certain information respecting them has reached us, either by tradition or historical records; the only evidence which we have is gathered from the undestroyed relics, which consuming time has spared to the thinking, enquiring observer. These, however, tho' they leave the period of their occur-

rence to the will of conjecture, present facts too numerous to admit of any doubt, that great changes have at some time taken place. There is no part of the earth, which has yet been explored, that does not contribute its portion of evidence to support this opinion. In some countries they are the most prominent objects which are presented to the scientific traveller, in others they are fainter—Time seems almost to have forgotten, that all earthly things are mutable.

Upon the whole surface of the globe, there is perhaps no portion, which furnishes more certain and indubitable evidence that the surface of the earth and the objects which are attached to it, are mutable, and have been at some period greatly changed, than that vast valley, which lies between the two great ranges of mountains, which separate the waters of the Pacific and Atlantic oceans, from that of the gulf of Mexico—the Allegany mountains on the east, and the Rocky mountains on the west. This valley occupies perhaps the greatest extent of country in the known world that is watered by a single river and its tributary streams. The observing traveller, is admonished at every step, that he is treading upon ground, which has, at some remote day, been the vast *officina* of some great natural operation.

It is conjectured by some, with considerable plausibility, that the greater part of this extensive territory has, at some period since the earth was first formed, been the bed of the ocean; and either, from some mighty revulsion from beneath, it has been elevated above the watery element, or, the briny wave, from some unknown cause, has withdrawn itself to its present bounds; and left this vast country, fertile, and admirably calculated, as we now find it, for the reception of the increasing numbers of the human family, with which it is so rapidly filling.

In support of this hypothesis, many facts are adduced. Marine substan-

ces are found in every section of this immense tract of country, and in many places in such large quantities, that we can solve the query of their being found so remote from the present bounds of the ocean, in no other manner, than by supposing them to have been, either originally produced where they are found, or carried and deposited there, by the same element in which they were produced and perfected. Some of these are found in situations so elevated, and so far from the ocean, that no reflecting person is willing to suppose they were carried there by any momentary swelling of the sea and overflowing of its waves. Large quantities of vegetable substances are also found in many places—some deposited near the surface of the earth—some at considerable depths beneath, having various strata of earth formed above them. Were these found in no other place than in the low lands near the large and rapid rivers, we could suppose them to have been deposited where they are found, and the strata deposited above them, by some great rise and inundation of the rivers. There are several circumstances, however, attendant upon these deposits of vegetable substances, which are much against the admission of the supposition; they are found in places, so far elevated above the present channels of the rivers, that but few points, even of the most elevated grounds, could have been above the waters which deposited them; and they are found in so many places, that the channels of the rivers must have successively changed, at different times, over the greater part of the country. With the existence of timber, leaves, &c. at greater or less distance from the surface of the earth, the farmers throughout the country, who have had to sink wells, to supply themselves with water, are generally well acquainted.

There is one fact which may be mentioned here, which seems equally to elude an explanation by either hy-

pothesis:—These strata are composed of earths, widely differing from any known alluvial ground at present near the banks of the rivers, or the shores of the ocean.

In the states of Kentucky, Ohio, and Indiana, are found masses of primitive rock; in some places they are solitary, in others they are found in considerable numbers in the same neighborhood. These rocks have no similarity to any quarries known in these sections of the country; and they are uniformly found only upon the surface of the earth. How they came here, and from whence they came, are questions which geologists find difficult to answer. We are informed by Mr. M'Kenzie, the celebrated Arctic traveller, that the rock far to the north is granitic; and those who support the theory, that the countries in which these scattered rocks are now found, were once the bed of the ocean, suppose these rocks to have adhered to those large mountains of ice, which are annually formed in the northern seas; and were carried beneath these icebergs southward, as the wind or current might have driven, and again were dropped, as the temperature of the climate and season, dissolved the congealed masses to which they had adhered, and by which they were carried.—Hence they are found distributed throughout the country; and hence also, they are found in considerable numbers, where some cause has kept large icebergs, having a considerable number of these rocks beneath them, stationary, until the ice by degrees melted, and the rocks fell from them all nearly in the same places.

And the very element, which appears to have been one of the great agents in performing these mutations, seems also in its turn, to have underwent a change. No small part of these relics, of which we have been speaking, are petrifications, which must have been formed in the watery element; but water, having petrifying qualities, is now found in very few places indeed, in all this extent of country; and

even the ocean itself, which at present washes our shores, will now seldom or never permit petrification to take place in its waters. We can, however, extend our hypothesis to the ocean, and, with as much propriety, suppose it also to have partaken of this general change, as the substances, which are believed to have been changed in it, or the appearance of the earth itself, which seems, in some degree, to have been changed by it. We know, that the combination of substances of different qualities, forms a compound, differing materially from either; in some such manner petrification takes place; and in some such manner, must have occurred, these mutations, did they ever take place.

If the hypothesis, advanced by some thinkers upon this subject, be true—that the cause of the great convulsion, which has so changed the face of this Western world, acted within the bowels of the earth as a volcano or earthquake; when this action occurred, must have been the time the transmutation in the elements also took place. So great an effort of nature as was necessary to have produced these changes upon the earth, alluded to, proceeding from the ignition of immense quantities of internal combustible substances, or from the extreme rarification of peculiar kinds of gasses, when the effect was produced, proceeding from either cause, the cause must have escaped, and such quantities of matter, possessing qualities so different from the atmosphere or the ocean, must have greatly changed the whole.

However little truth there may be in any of these opinions, which we have been stating, those things, which we have stated for facts, do exist.—The country in which they are found is spread before us—it is fast populating—the marks of human industry are seen in every part—the hand of civilization has changed its wild forests into splendid cities—and it is looking forward to strength, wealth, prosperity and importance, inferior to no por-

tion of the globe; and such it will probably remain, until some second convulsion shall lay in undistinguishable ruin, all those beautiful works of art, or perhaps roll back again the waves of the ocean to their original shores.

CREDULITY & INCREDULITY.

A few days since I was reading an anecdote in a newspaper, relative to a conversation, which was said to have taken place between a good old lady and her son, who had been to sea. She could not believe, that he had been to a country where there was continual winter, and where the sun was beneath the horizon for three weeks at a time, because nothing of the kind had ever come within the sphere of her observation. But she could readily conceive his having, when in the Red sea, hooked up one of the wheels of Pharaoh's chariot on his anchor, for there was some allusion to scripture in that.—I laid down the paper and fell into a train of thought, of which the following is a brief sketch.

There is a set of people in the world, who affect to despise every thing like credulity, and who denounce as superstition, all belief in any thing which is without the course of common events. They will believe nothing which they hear, although coming from the most indubitable source, if it is not in the circle of nature's ordinary operations; and this, merely because their weak judgments (in which however, they repose the most implicit confidence,) cannot fathom the reason nor explain the cause why it should be so. This is certainly a dangerous principle, by which to be guided. Wonderful discoveries in science are daily being made, and many of them are such, that unless we had the testimony of our greatest philosophers to depend upon, they would appear absolutely incredible. Who is there now that does not believe that lightning is the effect of an electric principle, and that air and water may be decomposed into their

constituent gasses? And yet how few have tested these facts, or have ever seen them tested by actual experiments. Were we to discard all testimony of this kind, and rely only upon the truth of such things as came under our own immediate personal scrutiny, there would soon be an end to all knowledge, and the arts and sciences would become extinct.

But this is far from being the worst evil which would result from such a course. It would form the very basis for universal atheism. If we admitted no truths, but such as our contracted minds could clearly and fully comprehend, RELIGION would soon cease to exist—REVELATION would find no believers, and consequently no advocates—CHRISTIANITY would be banished from the world—and mankind would again relapse into that state of savage barbarity and degradation, from which the light of the Gospel alone once enabled them to emerge.

But whilst we are avoiding these fatal effects, let us not run into the opposite extreme. It would be foolish to "shun Scylla only to perish in Charybdis." A moment's reflection may serve to convince any one, of the danger to be apprehended from the prevalence of credulity. A door would be opened for every species of imposture. Science would be but a mass of erroneous hypotheses; and Religion consist of unmeaning and ridiculous ceremonies. Senseless blocks would then, as formerly, represent the presiding deities of the world—priestcraft supply the place of revelation—and human sacrifices again be immolated at the shrine of Idolatry. The most gross and extravagant superstition would throw a general gloom over the affairs of man, and the degeneracy of his mind would be no less in this, than in the former case. So true it is, that the "two extremes of a subject nearly approach each other."

"Let us preserve the golden mean."

C.

Extract from an Eulogium upon Benjamin Rush, by David Ramsay, M. D.

Dr. Rush was a public writer for forty nine years, and from the nineteenth to the sixty eighth year of his age. It was a singular opinion of his own, but in unison with his medical system, "That ideas whether acquired from books or by reflection, produced a plethora in the mind, which can only be relieved by depletion from the pen or tongue. It is a matter of wonder, how a physician who had so many patients to attend; a professor who had so many pupils to instruct, could find leisure to write so much, and at the same time so well. Our wonder will cease, when it is known that he suffered no fragments of time to be wasted, and that he improved every opportunity of acquiring knowledge, and used all practicable means for retaining and digesting what he had acquired. In his early youth he had the best instructions, and in every period of his life great opportunities of mental improvement. He was gifted from Heaven with a lively imagination, a retentive memory, a discriminating judgment, and he made the most of all these advantages. From boyhood till his last sickness, he was a constant and an indefatigable student. He read much, but thought more. His mind was constantly engrossed with at least one literary inquiry, to which, for the time, he devoted his undivided attention. To make himself master of that subject, he read, he meditated, he conversed. It was less his custom to read a book through, than to read as much of all the authors within his reach as bore on the subject of his present inquiry. His active mind brooded over the materials thus collected, compared his ideas, and traced their relations to each other, and from the whole drew his own conclusions. In these and similar mental exercises, he was habitually and almost constantly employed, and daily aggregated and multiplied his intellectual stores. In this manner his sound judgment

was led to form those new combinations which constitute principles in science. To Dr. Rush every place was a school, every one with whom he conversed was a tutor. He was never without a book—for when he had no other, the book of nature was before him, and engaged his attention. In his lectures to his pupils, he advised them "to lay every person they met with, whether in a packet boat, a stage wagon, or a public road, under contribution for facts on physical subjects." What the professor recommended to them, he practised himself. His eyes and ears were open, to see, hear and profit by every occurrence. The facts he received from persons in all capacities are improved to some valuable purpose. He illustrates one of his medical theories by a fact communicated by a butcher; another from an observation made by a madman, in the Pennsylvania hospital. In his scientific work on the diseases of the mind, he refers frequently to poets, and particularly to Shakspeare, to illustrate the history of madness, and apologizes for it in the following words:—"They (poets) view the human mind in all its operations, whether natural or morbid, with a microscopic eye, and hence many things arrest their attention, which escape the notice of physicians." It may be useful to students to be informed that Dr. Rush constantly kept by him a note book, consisting of two parts, in one of which he entered facts as they occurred, in the other, ideas and observations as they arose in his own mind, or were suggested by others in conversation. His mind was under such complete discipline, that he could read and write with perfect composure, in the midst of the noise of his children, the conversation of his family, and the common interrogatories of his visiting patients. A very moderate portion of his time was devoted to sleep, and much less to the pleasures of the table. In the latter case, sittings were never prolonged but in conversation on useful subjects.

and for purposes totally distinct from the gratifications of appetite. In the course of nearly seventy years spent in this manner, he acquired a sum of useful practical knowledge, that has rarely been attained by one man in any age or country.

FICTION.

Naked and unadorned truth will frequently be rejected at once, and without reflection. The same moral, when conveyed under the pleasing garb of Fiction, is often received with avidity, and the principles imbibed before the reader is himself aware. But this, like almost every good, is attended with a corresponding evil. Vice often comes disguised under this cloak, and by its alluring wiles leads the unwary astray. Let then the reader of fictitious writings, be careful not to suffer his mind to be carried away by a pleasing style or vivid powers of description, until he has first examined the moral tendency of a tale. And let the novel-writer remember, that whenever he wields his pen, he is enlisted either for the promotion of the cause of vice or virtue. C.

Classical Quotation.—A city cockney, who, like most of his fraternity wished to appear of consequence abroad in proportion to his insignificance at home, was once travelling through one of our western states.—Having been much annoyed during the night, by the *fleas*, at an inn where he slept, he was raving about it in the morning, cursing the landlord, and threatening to expose him to the whole town. A person, whose attention was attracted by the noise, enquired of a bystander, what was the matter? Oh nothing, observed the wag, only, as Horace says,
"Fle-bit, et insignis tota cantabitur urbe."

THOUGHTS

ON GREATNESS.

I must suppose it almost impossible, for any person, who has paid the least

attention to what has ever been and is now going on in the world, to fail being struck with the truth of the sentiment contained in this couplet of Gray:

"Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,

And waste it's fragrance in the desert air."

How many, whose names are now emblazoned on the pages of history, as prodigies of valour or learning, might—had it not been for some "fortuitous combination of circumstances"—have never extended their fame beyond the private circle of friends and acquaintances. How many, whose exploits have furnished a "fruitful theme" for the orator and poet, might—with a very slight change in relative situation—have ran their short career, then sunk into oblivion, unpraised and unsung. Had not the situation of Europe presented Buonaparte with a theatre, on which to make a display of his extraordinary abilities, he might have lived and died in the obscurity from which he emanated. But why need we refer to other countries for an example? The history of our own revolution affords ample proof. The transactions of our national council, during that arduous struggle, clearly demonstrated, that there are to be found in all classes of society, men possessed of such genius and excellencies as should entitle them to a place on the records of fame; and that some prominent circumstance only, is necessary to rouse the mind and call forth these latent energies into action.

It is a mistaken idea, which many entertain, that the times are degenerate; and that the number of great men is less now, than it was some years back. It is true—they say—many become now distinguished in the peaceful arts and sciences, and in civil professions; but where are to be found such ruling spirits as those who directed the storm of the revolution? Where is an assemblage of men which can boast of the talents, eloquence, and patriotism which was concentrated in

the congress of '76? I answer at once: give us the same opportunity, and I doubt not, but that there would soon appear as many choice spirits, orators and patriots, as ever figured on the stage of the revolution.—Nay, arguing from the more advanced state of society and increase of population, I would say more—many more. We should soon have men who would become as eminent for wisdom as Franklin, for courage as Washington, for energy as Adams, for eloquence as Henry, and for patriotism as them all.

When a revolution or other national event occurs, to excite the mind of the people at large, it is not those who now stand foremost, that shall, or in general do, constitute the principal actors. All other distinctions are then done away, and merit alone gives the precedence. With a smooth sea and favorable gales, as it requires not much skill, it matters but little, who steers the vessel; but it is only to the most skilful and trusty, that the helm will be entrusted, when the lowering heavens proclaim the coming tempest. This pilot may probably be found among the common sailors; and so it is in the political vessel. Rome brought many of her most distinguished statesmen and generals from the plough, to preside in her councils, direct the republic, and take command of her armies. Washington was a farmer, Franklin a printer, and Sherman a shoemaker.

We are not to judge too hastily of the future eminence of men, by the astonishing progress which they sometimes make in early youth. Though precocity of genius is occasionally the precursor of distinguished manhood, yet it often happens, that, like the tree which puts forth its buds before the proper season, it soon meets a frost which prevents it from ever arriving at maturity. Many of the brightest ornaments of literature and science, have passed their youth, under the imputation of dullness and stupidity. And with respect to the early appearance of

talent, it may be observed, that its failure is more frequently to be attributed to the mistaken flattery of friends, than to any other cause. They tell the boy, that he is a genius, he takes it for granted, concludes that he can learn without study, relaxes his efforts, and finds, when too late, that genius without application is but a drug.

G.

THE CHARACTER OF

THE PETTIFOGGER.

No sooner has this nondescript, this anomaly in nature's works, the Pettifogger in embryo, hurried through his academic course, carrying with him from his college, just enough of learning to misquote.—No sooner has he become a little acquainted with the forms and customs of a small society, modestly termed the 'world'—and to sum up the history of his qualifications, has been mentioned in the public prints, under the imposing title of 'the orator of the 4th of July,' than he is hurried by his friends to the Bar, as the great Forum for the display of talent. In one respect they are right:—The law is the element, the native element, for the exercise of mind. At the Bar is the strife of intellect, the collision of genius. The properties of matter are here of little value—its excellencies, its beauties, of little ornament, of less importance. In another point however, they are wonderfully in error. His utter scorn of every thing like reflection or study, they declare one of the natural eccentricities of genius. His ignorance, which is equalled only by his unbounded assurance, is pronounced the privilege of gentle blood. And thus supported in spite of all natural impediment, he is dubbed an attorney and counsellor. Now mark the consequences.—Devoid of all information in the science he professes, he is driven to quibbles on words, and that last resort of little men, the picking of flaws; to maintain—not a reputation, for of this he has none, but his place in the records of

the court. As a substitute for argument, he employs a singular, peculiar, and until of late years an altogether unheard of, species of eloquence—that of so confounding the understanding, and puzzling the conceptive powers, both of Judge and Jury, as to baffle all attempts at eliciting the truth, and in this suspension of the judgment, chance, that knows neither right nor wrong, must pronounce the decision. He is characterized every where by impudence, confidence and volubility; and if orations were valued, like so much broad-cloth, by the ell, he would indeed be a prodigy. One quality however, which at least is useful to himself, may be remarked in all his flights of eloquence—that like wise and wholesome laws, they are of so general a nature, and have so little reference to the occasion that suggested them, as to be equally suitable for any other cause. As for that necessary ingredient, in all expositions of right, the thread of the argument—unless, like the orator, of whom Addison writes, he hold it in his hand in the shape of a *pack-thread*, it will be sought for in vain. He is moreover, like the bee, a great lover of variety, and contemns nothing so much as following the beaten track. On a trial of life and death he can demonstrate to a jury that Adam was black—prove by indisputable arguments that variety of colour exists no where but in the imagination—and that our hemisphere is not illuminated because light comes in with the sun, but because at its approach darkness goes out. What is still more surprising than all this, is, that he takes a kind of pride in exposing his ignorance, and makes a boast of what an orator of the days of Cicero, would have considered his eternal disgrace, that of attempting a client's defence, without having inquired into the merits of his cause.

He is hence obliged to engage himself in unjust suits; for who that has any confidence in the justice of his case, will submit it to the care of one

so imperfectly qualified. Imputations must follow upon his character; nor do they stop here—his profession comes in for its share of the infamy—it protects the evil and condemns the good—screens the guilty from punishment, and at most extends but a feeble and dubious support to the virtuous and honest.

S. S.

NAPPING.

There is nothing more common to all mankind than napping. Our earliest existence, and the commencement of our career in life begins with it; when the body is superannuated and worn out with fatigue, we seem to spend the evening of our earthly existence—and many, from their ignorance, their sloth, their poverty, and their bad success in the common affairs of the world seem to have been napping all their lives.

A good bargain is afloat in the morning, in the money-market, in the cotton-market, or in some other market, but the unfortunate and unsuccessful speculator is napping. A wealthy client with a good cause and a big fee, comes in early, brushing the morning dew from the grass, hurried on by the hope of a successful termination of his cause, or by the vexation of some troublesome litigious neighbor, but the attorney is napping; he is impatient and can't wait, and he immediately calls upon some one of the "gown," who has his *eyes open*. A patient is sick and sends for his physician, but the sluggard is napping; the disease waits not for naps, the physician who has his windows thrown open, gets business. The divine is no less unfortunate; he indulges in morning naps—drones away the day—sunday comes—the hour of his appointment arrives—he enters the pulpit unprepared—his discourse is delivered without energy, and without interest—and his congregation is soon comfortably napping. With the student the hour of recitation comes round; but he feels he is not well pre-

pared, and upon reflection, he recollects he also has been napping.

There is no calculating the time that is thus lost to society in mere nappings; and we think it will be perceived upon examination, that a considerable portion of the misfortunes and bad success in life of every class of society may be traced to napping.

The habit of napping in the morning is very easily acquired, and a little indulgence places it among the bad constitutional habits of the body. It is more difficult to get clear of because it soon becomes so agreeable; and it is equally injurious to the body and the mind. The fixed habit of napping, in some degree, suspends the active and decisive powers of the mind in its waking hours, like those of the body are suspended in its nappings; the mind also acquires the habit of napping.—All its impressions are imperfectly retained; its thoughts are but half formed; its exertions are faint and confused; and its whole energies are enfeebled.

J. * *

PATRIOTISM.

Patriotism is essential to the prosperity of every government, and where it predominates, the people must flourish. In no country is its influence more generally seen, than in the republic of the United States, and no government is in a more flourishing condition. Here every honest man loves his country; and sure no one could bestow his affections on a more worthy object, than the source from whence he derives his dearest rights. Here, the rich and the poor, the learned and the ignorant alike enjoy the greatest earthly blessing. He that is injured knows where to fly for redress, no one dares trample on his fellow's rights.

"The weak and the rich have all one equal cause

Of justice; and the lower ranks when wrong'd,

Know their redress against injurious greatness."

In the enjoyment of such inestima-

ble privileges, a man must, and will love the country that affords them. Such is the republic of the United States, and being such, by her citizens she is honored and adored. The spirit of patriotism existing among the American youth is unexampled; to serve their country appears to be the height of their ambition; should a tyrant rise to usurp the reins of government, and lay waste their liberties, every youth would be a

BRUTUS.

THE LITERARY FOCUS.

Miami University,

OXFORD, (OHIO,) JUNE, 1827.

✍ In presenting the first number of the LITERARY FOCUS to the public, some apology is perhaps necessary, for the unavoidable delay, which has prevented its issuing until this time. It was anticipated, that the first number would have appeared as early as the month of May; circumstances beyond our control have, however, defeated until now, the accomplishment of our design. But it has commenced, and we hope it will meet the expectations of our friends, and give that satisfaction, for which it has been our endeavour to qualify it. The liberal patronage, which it has already received, deserves our warmest thanks—this disposition of a generous public to patronize our work, gives us evidence that our expectations were not unfounded; no exertion will be omitted on our part to make it merit this public mark of approbation. But whatever may be its defects, we cannot omit recollecting on this occasion, the well known sentiment with which Dr. Johnson closes his last number of the Rambler—"We envy not the honours which wit and learning bestow, in any other cause, if we

can be numbered amongst those, who give ardour to virtue, and confidence to truth."

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

The Editors cannot dismiss this number to the public, without returning their thanks to the numerous correspondents who have honored them with their communications. Owing to the number of pieces presented, and the limited size of the paper, many were of course omitted, which it would have given us much pleasure to have inserted; and some have been selected, not so much from any decided preference, as from the necessity of making *some* choice.—We hope for a continuance of their favours.

A Society has been formed by the Professors and Students of the Miami University, auxiliary to the Ohio State Colonization Society. The object of this society, and of the societies to which it is auxiliary, is the colonization of the free people of colour on the coasts of Africa.—"Let the good work go on."

LOVE'S POVERTY.

The emperor Adrian very innocently asked Epictetus: "Why Venus is painted naked?" The philosopher replied: "Because she always reduces her followers to such poverty that they have no clothes." The Italians, more knowing, have a proverb: "Bella famina che ride vuol der borsa che piange."—"the smiles of a pretty woman are the tears of the purse."—The latter must be drained to insure the continuation of the former.—*N. Y. Mirror.*

Reason and religion are the only restraints upon the passions and effectual barriers against vice.

That time and labour are worse than useless, that have been occupied in laying up treasures of false knowledge, which it will one day be necessary to unlearn, and in storing up mistaken ideas, which we must hereafter remember to forget. Timotheus, an ancient teacher of rhetoric, always demanded a double fee from those pupils who had been instructed by others; for in this case, he had not only to plant in, but to root out.—*Lacon.*

Some men, who know that they are great, are so very haughty withal, and insufferable, that their acquaintance discover their greatness, only by the tax of humility, which they are obliged to pay, as the price of their friendship. Such characters are as tiresome and disgusting in the journey of life, as rugged roads are to the weary traveller, which he discovers to be *turnpike only by the toll.*—*Ib.*

An Athenian, who wanted eloquence, but was very brave, when another had in a long and brilliant speech promised great affairs, rose up and said, "Men of Athens, all that he has said, I will do."—*N. Y. Mirror.*

Quinn, the celebrated comedian, stopping one day to dine at an inn, where he knew, from experience, that the charges were not of the most moderate description, the landlord complained of being much troubled by rats. Quinn promised to give him a receipt to drive them away. On quitting the house, he had as usual, an extravagant bill put into his hand, which he paid without remonstrance. Whilst mounting his horse, the landlord reminded him of his promise, upon which Quinn returned him his bill, saying: "When the rats come again, show them this, and I'll engage they'll never trouble you any more."

Repentance without amendment, is like continually pumping without mending the leak.



ORIGINAL POETRY.

"The primary aim of a poet is to please and to move; and, therefore, it is to the imagination, and the passions, that he speaks. He may, and he ought to have it in his view, to instruct and to reform; but it is indirectly, and by pleasing and moving, that he accomplishes this end."—BLAIR.

STORMS AND SUNSHINE.

Away, with your faces that Heaven
has clad,

Forever in smiles of unmeaning bright-
ness,

The gayest natures are sometimes sad,
Nor do noblest hearts always bound
with lightness.

The cheek, that nature has doomed to
wear,

Forever the same inexpressive smile,
I never can think, beams half so fair,
As the brow that sorrow o'ercasts for
a while.

Say who would admire a brilliant sky,
Were it always clad in unchanging
blue?

Or would ocean's smile delight the eye,
Were it mov'd by no gales that o'er it
flew?

Ah no! for the eye bedim'd by sorrow,
The beamings of joy, as brilliantly
brighten,

And the brow that from anger a cloud
can borrow,

Is the first that the sunbeams of love
enlighten.

The soul that to friendship beats ful-
lest and strongest,

Responds to another as warm as its
own,

And the heart formed to love the firm-
est, the longest,

Scarce seems to exist, when existing
alone. S.

THE POWER OF GOD.

I've seen the earth at early morn,
While darkness yet held gloomy sway
O'er half creation; I have borne
The pride of man, throughout the day,
And wandered, at this lonely hour,
To view creation's Author's power.

I've seen the grey light pierce the
shade,

Which night had bound the world in;
I've seen the mists of morning fade,
The sun, in splendour shining,
Rise from the east, and tinge the skies,
With all the rainbow's varied dyes.

I've seen it in the lucid glare
Of Heaven's own lightning; I have
been,

Where forests have been hurled thro'
air,

And trembled at the sights I've seen;
I've heard it in the sullen roar
Of breakers, on a distant shore.

I've seen it in the rising gale,
When the wild waves were in commo-
tion;

I've heard it in the sea-boy's wail,
When found'ring on the waste of o-
cean;

I've view'd it in the twinkling star,
Seen in the firmament afar.

I've seen the haughty warrior quail,
And quiver, like an aspen leaf,
His hopes expire, his courage fail,

I've seen him gasp for breath,
On fancy's pinions, I have flown,
And view'd the splendour of His throne.

C. J. S.

CINCINNATI.

ACROSTIC.

Curse on thy wrinkled, haggard brow,
A foe to every bliss art thou—
Rather than live oppressed by thee,
E'en death itself my soul should free.

SELECTED.

FROM THE ALBANY MASONIC RECORD.

CAROLINE DE MOOR.

BY WM. L. M'LAUGHLIN.

The sun had set, the earth was wet,
With heaven's balmy dew,
The western gale sigh'd in the vale,
The vernal rose to woo;
The evening star shone bright afar
Upon the cottage door,
Where by its light I sought that night,
Fair Caroline De Moor.

In twilight shade I met the maid,
Before my heart I knew,
And long I lov'd and long I prov'd
That heart both fond and true;
By sweet consent that night I went,
To woo and win her sure,
In hope's gay bloom, to hear my doom,
From Caroline De Moor.

The lilac grove, and bower of love,
Was balm as I drew near,
And mem'ry sought each well known
spot,
To young affection dear;
My pulses beat, with hasty feet
I sprang into the door,
And madly prest the death cold breast
Of Caroline De Moor!

There is a grief that mocks belief,
And feeds upon the soul,
So cold and drear, that not a tear
Can mark its deep controul;
I've prov'd its smart, and when my
heart,
No longer will endure,

From nature driv'n, I'll seek in heaven,
Sweet Caroline De Moor.
U. S. Ship Lexington, April 2, 1827.

WOMAN.

Once on a time, to forests wild,
Remote from public view,
An aged sire his fav'rite child
In infancy withdrew.

That, peaceful and secluded there,
Amid the silent grove,
The boy might shun each female snare,
And never learn to love.

But soon as years had roll'd away,
And fancy's power began,
Impatient of paternal sway,
He sought the haunts of man.

The Youth beheld the varying scene,
In joy and wonder lost;
But women's soft attractive mein
Beguiled his eye the most.

"What beauteous form is this," he
cried,

"That looks so heavenly sweet,"
"A bird, my son," the sire replied,
"Unknown in our retreat."

"Oh! would it," said the youth, "but
flee

To our sequestered cell;
And there in solitude with me
Forevermore would dwell!

Together thro' the woods we'd stray,
And build the self same nest;
I'd woo it all the live-long day,
And clasp it to my breast!"

TERMS OF

The Literary Focus.

Price to subscribers—\$1.00 in ad-
vance—\$1.25 in six months—\$1.50 if
not paid until the expiration of the
year.

All letters and communications ad-
dressed to the Editors, must be *post-
paid*.

J. B. CAMRON, PR. HAMILTON, O.